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SHIP SANITATION AND FIRST AID FOR SEAMEN.

A NEW MANUAL ON SHIP SANITATION AND FIRST AID FOR OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE MERCHANT MARINE.

The Secretary of Commerce has recently approved an amendment to the general rules and regulations prescribed by the Board of Supervising Inspectors, which requires that no candidate for original license as master, mate, pilot, or engineer shall be examined unless he has completed a course of instruction in "first aid" approved by the United States Public Health Service and has passed an oral examination based on a Manual on Ship Sanitation and First Aid recently prepared by the Public Health Service in cooperation with the Seamen's Church Institute, of New York City.

The manual is intended primarily to furnish officers and men of the American merchant marine a simple but comprehensive textbook on ship sanitation and hygiene, an outline of surgical conditions that obtain on shipboard, and fundamental information regarding the treatment of disease. The information contained in the manual will be of greatest value to officers and men of vessels that do not carry a ship's doctor and lack facilities for the care of the sick and injured.

Sanitary conditions on shipboard are, in many instances, not what they should be—conditions that are due largely to ignorance regarding the elementary rules of sanitation and hygiene. Aside from the humanitarian point of view, it is highly desirable from an economic viewpoint that the sanitary conditions be improved. Vessels are often compelled to run shorthanded because of illness in members of the crew that could have been avoided by simple medical treatment or by the application of fundamental sanitary knowledge. It was because of these conditions that the Secretary of Commerce approved the amendment to the regulations requiring that candidates for original licenses as master, mate, pilot, or engineer have "first-aid" knowledge.

Preventive medicine marks a signal advancement in general public health work; and just as the dissemination of its principles has made for improved conditions of life on land, the same practice should contribute toward improvement in sanitation and hygiene on shipboard.